Kingston St Mary Parish Council
Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting, held on 12th May 2026
at the Playing Field Pavilion, Kingston St Mary, starting at 19:00

1. To elect a Chairman and sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office form

Cllr Townsend was proposed as Chair by Cllr Boyce and seconded by Cllr Darch. The Council unanimously voted to elect Cllr Townsend as Chair. Cllr Townsend accepted the role and signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

2. Attendance and Apologies

In attendance:
Cllr P Townsend (Chairman)
Cllr P Boyce
Cllr D Darch
Cllr S Hancock
Cllr A Simpson
Mrs K Gibbins (Parish Clerk)

Apologies:
Cllr D Stripp
Cllr N O'Donnell (Somerset)
Cllr D Perry (Somerset)

No members of the public were in attendance.

3. Councillors' Declarations of Interest

None.

4. Approval of Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 16th April 2026

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting were approved and will be signed as a true record at a future date.

5. To appoint members responsible for

a. Planning - The Council agreed this would be a shared responsibility.
b. KSM Playing Field Management Committee Representative – The Council appointed Cllr Simpson and Cllr Townsend.
c. Finance Member/Auditor – The Council appointed Cllr Townsend

6. To appoint members responsible for outside bodies

a. Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee – The Council appointed Cllr Stripp.
b. NALC/SALC – The Council appointed the Clerk.

7. Members of the public with responsibilities – To ascertain whether the current members of the public agree to hold responsibilities for

a. Footpaths and Rights of Way – The Council resolved not to appoint as no one suitable has come forward.
b. Tree Warden – The Council agreed a tree warden was not required as the Council has 2 independent contractors they ask to attend to trees in the parish as and when required.
c. Natural Environment – The Council resolved not to appoint as no one suitable has come forward.
d. Internal Auditor – The Council agreed to ask the current auditor if she would continue in this role.
e. Highways – The Council agreed to ask IF if he would continue in this role.

8. Local Government Association Model Councillor Code of Conduct – to review and adopt

The Council reviewed the Local Government Association Model Councillor Code of Conduct and resolved to adopt it for another year.

9. Standing Orders and Procedures – to review and adopt

a. Standing Orders - The Council reviewed its Standing Orders and resolved to adopt them for another year.

b. Financial Regulations - The Council reviewed its Financial Regulations and resolved to adopt them for another year.

c. Internal Audit Procedure - The Council reviewed its Internal Audit Procedure and resolved to adopt it for another year.

10. Planning

Applications

Case Ref: 20/26/0015/T - Notification to fell one eucalyptus tree and two cypress trees within Kingston St. Mary Conservation Area at St. Mary's House, Winpenny Lane, Kingston St. Mary

The Council considered the above referenced planning application and resolved to fully support it.

Case Ref: 20/26/0013 - Erection of a single storey extension to the rear and porch to the side of 2 Edgeborough Cottages, Staplegrove

The Council considered the above referenced planning application and resolved to fully support it.

Case Ref: 20/25/0040 - Conversion of garage and loft space into ancillary accommodation with insertion of roof lights, replacement of windows and doors, erection of extension to storage shed and erection of carport at St Marys House, Winpenny Lane, Kingston St Mary

The Council considered the above planning application and resolved not to comment as its previous comments (14th January 2026) remained unchanged.

Please note that the Parish Council's full response to the above planning applications can be found on Somerset Council's website or by following the link below:

https://www3.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/asp/webpages/plan/plapplookup.asp

Other Planning Matters

Somerset Local Plan 2045 – The Chair advised Somerset Council has commissioned a Local Housing Needs Assessment 2025 as part of the Local Plan Process which confirms Somerset needs 75,000 houses. The Chair explained how the number had been calculated and the Council agreed they cannot challenge this.

Staplegrove East Development – The Chair advised he, Cllr Stripp and Somerset Cllrs O'Donnell and Perry attended the exhibition which he said was very good. The exhibition was run by Stonewater. Stonewater has made some changes to the masterplan which the Chair summarised. Stonewater has said they are prepared to consider changes to the cycle routes proposed to facilitate our active travel routes and want us to let them know what our plans are. The deadline for comments is 14th May. The Chair agreed to respond with a holding letter asking if we can discuss this at a future date.

11. Matters Outstanding from Previous Minutes

a. Internet Banking - To be carried forward to a future meeting.

b. Annual Parish Meeting – The Clerk referred the Council to the list of those attending. There are representatives from at least 10 organisations who will be attending, and more than half would like to make a short presentation. She will e-mail all those attending to update them on the format for the evening. The Council discussed setting up for the meeting and purchasing nibbles and refreshments. The Clerk agreed to ask Cllr Stripp to organise this.

c. Somerset Community Foundation: Stronger Communities Fund – The Chair advised the Playing Field Committee's application for the grant for the fete was successful. The Playing Field Committee has been awarded £1,250 to go towards the fete.

d. The Spinney – The chair advised of a report of a large branch coming down in the Spinney which just missed a person walking in the area with their dog. The Council agreed to contact The Woodland Trust to see if it can get a copy of the management plan so that it has a better idea of what the policy and plans are for The Spinney. The Council agreed it is a very valuable community asset and it is important they can manage the expectations of the parishioners regarding this community woodland.

e. Noticeboard – The Chair advised we have finally received the licences for signing. Once signed and returned we will be able to erect the noticeboard. Cllr Hancock said she would contact the individual who made the noticeboard.

f. The British Hedgehog Preservation Society – Cllr Stripp was going to speak to the school. The Council agreed to carry this item forward to the June meeting.

g. Enhanced Highways Maintenance Scheme – The Chair advised IF couldn't attend the last LCN Highways meeting, but from what he gathers, there is no way the Parish Council can get access to any of the additional £5m funding which will be controlled centrally, and Somerset Council will decide which gullies to clear. He went on to say we are awaiting the outcome of our proposal regarding the gritting of the Kingston Road to the Primary School and up Buncombe Hill.

12. Village Green Maintenance

Cllr Simpson discussed the background to the village green rota. The village green rota involves cleaning the muck off the seat and picking up the debris on the path. The Clerk agreed to speak to Jack Councill about whether he can take on the cleaning of the seat and tidying of the green area every 2 months as well as cleaning the benches on Bay Hill and Leach's Field and clearing any weeds/debris from underneath them. The Council went on to discuss the cutting of the playing field and the Chair agreed to speak to the person currently cutting the grass to find out what their plans are for the future.

13. Connectivity Plan Consultation

Cllr Darch agreed to respond to the consultation before the deadline of 22 May 2026.

14. Closure of Permissive Path from Lodes Lane to Church

The Chair advised the footpath has been reopened. He said he and Cllr Stripp went to see the property owner who has concerns about people damaging his property, trespassing, privacy and security. The Chair and Cllr Stripp put the property owner in touch with PCSO Marshall Bernhardt and the Chair said he would write an article for Link-Up, emphasizing that the owners property should be treated with respect. The Council discussed the footpath and how they might protect it for future use.

15. Climate Emergency

Cllr Darch talked about the People's Emergency Briefing and was looking forward to the screening at the Annual Parish Meeting. She talked about Taunton Town Council's Climate Working Group which she sits in on and some of the interesting nature things going on. There are plans to create a pollinator corridor from Netherclay to Firepool which the Bumble Bee Conservation Trust and Wildlife Trust are involved in as well. She also discussed a couple of other climate initiatives.

16. Playing Field Committee

The Chair said he had applied for S106 funds towards the purchase of the new toddler playing tower. He said the company installing the tower were looking at a 1st June start date. Cllr Simpson presented the equipment she has found as potential replacements for the wooden playing field shelter which was burned down. There were two different designs put forward, a shelter and a dug out. The price quoted for the four sided shelter was £7,147.00 + VAT and the three sided shelter was £5,783.00 + VAT. The delivery and installation cost on top of that would be £3,500.00. The Council discussed the dugout structure. There was a 4 seater and a 6 seater and a cost of £2,219.00 (inclusive of VAT) quoted. The Council discussed the shelter and the need for a replacement and resolved to explore different options including provision of limited car parking.

17. Local Community Network

The Chair referred the Council to Cllr Stripp's Youth Report. The Council agreed to pay West Monkton Parish Council £120.00 towards the cost of coordinating the youth provision in the LCN.

18. Kingston St Mary Community Land Trust

The Chair referred the Councill to Cllr Stripp's update including the active travel route and the Community Wealth Fund.

19. Kingston Community Partnership

Cllr Darch mentioned the litter pick and felt it was successful and it was worthwhile organising a litter pick in the spring as well.

20. Financial Matters

To note the monthly bank reconciliation, authorise the following payments and note the first instalment of the precept:

Payments

£830.64 – Zurich Insurance, renewal of annual insurance premium
£12,000.11 (£10,000.09 + VAT) – Absolute Play Ltd, 50% deposit for climbing multi-unit and surfacing
£374.40 – Payroll Specialist Ltd, payroll processing costs for 2026/27
£100.00 – KAPACC, donation towards family fun cycle ride on 21 June 2026
£68.60 – HMRC, Clerk's PAYE & NI contributions
£673.49 – J K Grounds Maintenance, grass cutting of village green and repair of fence in toddlers play area

Receipts

£22,330.00 - Precept 2026/27 - First Instalment

21. Items for Next Agenda

Please give any items to the Clerk.

22. Items for Link Up and KSM Website

The Chair will produce a report for Link Up.

23. Meeting Closed

21:00h

24. Date of Next Meeting

9th June 2026